

# Tidy Towns Competition 2009

## *Adjudication Report*

Centre: **Achill** Ref: **502**  
County: **Mayo** Mark: **206**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **19/06/2009**

	Maximum Mark	Mark Awarded 2009
Overall Development Approach	50	35
The Built Environment	50	27
Landscaping	50	24
Wildlife and Natural Amenities	50	18
Litter Control	50	25
Waste Minimisation	20	11
Tidiness	30	14
Residential Areas	40	23
Roads, Streets and Back Areas	50	22
General Impression	10	7
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>206</b>

### **Overall Development Approach:**

Achill Gateway Association is welcome to the 2009 Competition. You would appear to have a good working relationship with local and national organisations, such as the Rural Social Scheme, the Department of Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Achill Development Company, an Taisce etc. You would also appear to communicate well with local schools and involve them in your work - the bat boxes supplied by the woodwork class was a particularly interesting and worthwhile project. We were interested to hear that the Sewerage Scheme was underway and certainly work in relation to this was evident on the day. We were interested to hear of the village enhancement scheme and look forward to reading it in the not too distant future.

### **The Built Environment:**

The new block of buildings containing the fire station, credit union, Udaras na Gaeltachta, coast guard and library was greatly admired. It is of a modern, vernacular style which fits in well to the village, while still being modern and avoiding the possible pit fall of looking pastiche. Some attractive displays of daisies were evident outside this building. The church was well presented in red stone with attractive grounds, including some spectacular Easter lilies to the front and rhododendrons and montbretia to the rear. The school was quite fresh, but maybe some landscaping could be considered in this location? Commercial properties were a little inconsistent in terms of presentation. Ostan Oilean Acla was well presented in stone. The traditional garage comprising Sweeney's was very fresh, as was the Garda. Station. The hall with its portico looked quite charming. The gable of the shop will need painting before next year's competition, as will Brett's Stores. The Achill Sound Hotel and Lavelle's looked well. A building beside the beauty salon looked quite neglected.

### **Landscaping:**

We were pleased to hear of your wildlife corridors and the planting of wild flowers to roadsides, this sounds like a most suitable approach to landscaping for your island setting. Concrete tubs throughout the village were

admired, with their stencilled decoration and colourful displays of nasturtiums. The planting of hedgerows is commendable. The garden centre looked very cheerful with its displays of flowers and planting outside. Rhododendrons, wild daisies and montbretia made marvellous displays in the hedgerows, the latter must look particularly marvellous when in full bloom later in the summer months. The magnificent, gravelled landscaped space at the centre of the village was admired, as was that on the Keel side of the village.

#### **Wildlife and Natural Amenities:**

We were pleased to hear that the local secondary school students had provided bat boxes. The ongoing erection of bird and bat boxes is laudable. We were interested to hear of the hedgehogs and hope that they will make a reappearance soon. The planting of wildlife corridors is commendable. We were delighted to hear of your relationship with Birdwatch Ireland and are sure that there must be some unique visitors to the island! The close relationship you have established with the National Parks and Wildlife Service is also reassuring. We look forward to hearing of your progress regarding the bats and future nature trail.

#### **Litter Control:**

The standard of litter control was very good on the day, apart from the odd paper along main streets. However, even one or two papers are all the more obvious in a village of Achill Sound's size. We were pleased to hear of the appointment of a litter warden and wish him/her all the best in their work. Communication with the County Council Litter Warden is important.

#### **Waste Minimisation:**

We were pleased to hear that the Mayo County Council Environmental Department Representative came to your open night to advise you in this regard. Congratulations to the school on their retention of their Green Flag. The segregation of litter picked in your clean ups is commendable. The use of composting facilities is commendable. Have you considered having composting workshops for local residents? We were pleased to hear that the village enhancement scheme provides for additional recycling facilities.

#### **Tidiness:**

The village generally looked well on the day. However, there were a few problem areas such as the field opposite Mc Hugh's and some pre-cast concrete building materials appeared to have been abandoned to an area beside the Achill Sound Hotel. Some hedging appeared to have been planted in front of the former, possibly in an effort at screening?

#### **Residential Areas:**

Houses in the village and along approach roads generally looked well cared for on the day. The Radharc na Mara estate looked very well, and some attractive gardens were admired throughout.

#### **Roads, Streets and Back Areas:**

The new bridge was admired for its modern and quite dramatic arched design. We were pleased to hear that signage has been changed to the original Irish. We look forward to the new play area and car park proposed under the new village enhancement scheme. Do discourage advertising hoardings, as they can give approach roads a rather cluttered appearance. The "Welcome to Achill" sign looked well, with its colourful display of nasturtiums. The sewerage scheme was well underway on the day and this was taken into consideration when judging this category of the competition. The road surfaces were somewhat rough on the day, although the relatively new lamp standards were admired. The rear areas should not be ignored when considering overall presentation.

#### **General Impression:**

It was a many years since this adjudicator had the pleasure of visiting Achill and the first in capacity as adjudicator of this competition. It has a magnificent setting with spectacular scenery, and the marvellous scent of turf filled the air. It looked well on the day.